THE THEOLOGIAN WAR AND MAN WORSHIP - PART 1

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My Practice Of Avoiding Online Doctrinal Debates, Scriptures Admonish Us To Avoid Arguing, Beware Of Man Worship And Cult Personality Worship, Glory In The Lord And Not In Man, The Scribes And Pharisees Sought Their Own Glory, God Is A Very Jealous God, Remain Humble Before The Lord Or Pay The Price, Our Only Foundation: Jesus Christ The Prophets The Apostles, Online Doctrinal Confusion And Man Worship, My Respect For Theologians Of The Past, Led And Taught By The Holy Spirit

As some of my online friends will already know, for years now, I have made it my personal policy to remain clear of online doctrinal debates, because as I explain in my article entitled "Should Christians Engage in Doctrinal Debates?", I have found them to be both a waste of time, and usually an exercise in futility. My personal practice is to back out of an online conversation whenever an individual begins to show resistance to what I am posting, becomes hostile, resorts to childish name-calling, or engages in any similar negative activity.

My position is this: Why pursue an issue if a person is not ready to hear it for whatever their reasons? Until they have an open mind and heart to whatever it is that you're talking about, you are just wasting your time. You might as well go and talk to a brick wall. After all, you would get the same results. But aside from the futility of the situation, as I mention in the aforementioned article, such heated doctrinal debates are in fact contrary to the sound advice which we find in the pages of the New Testament, as becomes evident by this group of sample verses:

"But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."

2 Timothy 2:23-26, KJV

"But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain."
Titus 3:9, KJV

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

1 Corinthians 1:10, KJV

But that point aside, what I really wanted to do is make a general statement regarding what I see so often occurring on the social networks, such as Facebook. It is something that bothers me. In fact, I would say that it really irks me. I am referring to the fact that whenever I encounter certain online doctrinal debates, the people involved frequently refer back to their favorite theologians, quote from them, and compare them to what other theologians have said or written.

Now on the surface, it may at first not appear as if there is anything wrong with doing this. To be honest, sometimes there's really nothing wrong with it. However, other times, the people who become involved in these online discussions become so embroiled in this stuff, that they do not even realize that what they are doing has in fact become wrong. Furthermore, this tendency to worship, or at least overly admire certain people -- what basically amounts to cult personality worship -- is something which the Apostle Paul clearly warned against. Consider the following group of Bible verses:

"For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" "For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."

1 Corinthians 3:3-7, KJV

"And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"

1 Corinthians 4:6-7, KJV

"These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, HAVING MEN'S PERSONS IN ADMIRATION because of advantage."

Jude 1:16, KJV

Do you see that? Everyone was latching on to their favorite teacher and arguing amongst themselves, just like certain Christians today who mention the writings of perhaps Luther, or Calvin, or Augustine, or Zwingli, or Knox, or Spurgeon, or some other notable Reformer or theologian of the past. As you can see from the previous verses, the Apostle Paul was quite concerned about this, particularly because he was one of the people who the Disciples were overly admiring. Notice that Jude even writes "having men's persons in admiration". In that particular case, they were apparently doing it for some personal advantage. Today we disgustingly refer to this practice as "brown-nosing" or "a__-kissing".

But as I was saying, the Apostle Paul was so concerned about this development, that in a number of his Epistles, he tried to set the brethren straight with verses such as these:

"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body

of this death?" Romans 7:24, KJV

"But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

1 Corinthians 1:27-31, KJV

"Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours;"

1 Corinthians 3:21, KJV

"For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day."

1 Corinthians 4:9-13, KJV

"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!"

1 Corinthians 9:16, KJV

"But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth . . . Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

1 Corinthians 10:17-18, 31, KJV

"And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not

meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

1 Corinthians 15:8-10, KJV

"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."

2 Corinthians 4:5, KJV

"For his [Apostle Paul's] letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible . . . But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

2 Corinthians 10:10, 17, KJV

"Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me."

2 Corinthians 12:5-6, KJV

"Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." Galatians 5:26, KJV

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Galatians 6:14, KJV

"Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;"

Ephesians 3:7-8, KJV

"Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ."

1 Thessalonians 2:6, KJV

Quite in contrast to the Apostle Paul and the other Apostles who strived to remain humble before the Lord and before the Lord's flocks, as the Gospels clearly reveal, those proud, self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees just loved to receive a lot of attention, and they greatly enjoyed sucking up honor and praise from men. They relished being admired, and they made a big show of it as well. As a result, Jesus did not hesitate to rebuke them and expose their hypocrisy, as can easily be determined by the following group of verses:

"BUT ALL THEIR WORKS THEY DO FOR TO BE SEEN OF MEN: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted . . . Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." Matthew 23:5-12, 27-28, KJV

"And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces, And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation."

Mark 12:38-40, KJV

"Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets." Luke 11:43, KJV

"Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts; Which devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same

shall receive greater damnation." Luke 20:46-47, KJV

"Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." John 12:42-43, KJV

As you may know, there is a real danger in yielding to this proud, foolish behavior. That is because the Bible clearly warns us that our God is a very jealous God, and He won't have any other gods -- or people -- come before Him. Again, this plain truth is revealed in the following set of verses:

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;" Exodus 20:4-5, KJV

"For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God:"
Exodus 34:14, KJV

"For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God."

Deuteronomy 4:24, KJV

"Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me,"

Deuteronomy 5:9, KJV

"(For the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth."

Deuteronomy 6:15, KJV

So, it behooves all of us to strive to walk humbly before the Lord, and to not become lifted up in our pride, or to allow ourselves to become the objects of worship by others. Furthermore, unlike the people of whom Paul wrote, we must not make the mistake of overly admiring anyone, whether they are a notable theologian of the past, or a popular preacher of our current day, or anyone else. If we do fail to keep our pride in check, God will surely deal with us. Following are some additional verses for your consideration:

"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud." Proverbs 16:18-19, KJV

"The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts."
Psalm 10:4, KJV

"The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate." Proverbs 8:13, KJV

"When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom."

Proverbs 11:2, KJV

"Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom."

Proverbs 13:10, KJV

"In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride: but the lips of the wise shall preserve them."

Proverbs 14:3, KJV

"The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility." Proverbs 15:33, KJV

"A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit." Proverbs 29:23, KJV

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is

light."
Matthew 11:28-30, KJV

"At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 18:1-4, KJV

"And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them, When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him; And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Luke 14:7-11, KJV

"But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble . . . Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."

James 4:6, 10, KJV

"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:"

1 Peter 5:5-6, KJV

"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

1 John 2:16, KJV

Friends, let us never forget that our faith is supposed to be built directly on the foundation of Jesus Christ and the Apostles and the Holy Scriptures, and certainly on anyone or anything else, no matter who they are or what it is. Neither should our faith be based upon the oftentimes questionable doctrines of men who are often in conflict with each other. I am reminded of the following group of Bible verses:

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

1 Corinthians 3:11, KJV

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;"

Ephesians 2:19-20, KJV

"Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,"

1 Peter 2:6-7, KJV

"This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner." Acts 4:11, KJV

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock [Jesus referring to Himself and NOT to Peter] I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matthew 16:18, KJV

"And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."

1 Corinthians 10:4, KJV

"Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? . . . And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them."

Matthew 21:42, 44-45, KJV

"Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces . . . And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." Daniel 2:34, 44, KJV

"Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

Psalm 2:6-9, KJV

So as you can see, our foundation is Jesus Christ and the Prophets and the Apostles and the things which they taught and wrote, and NOT the plethora of conflicting theological doctrines which have become so pervasive in our modern day. Yet despite this indisputable truth, what do we see going on both online and offline?

One online user will say "Well, Calvin said so-and-so", and then another person will reply with "Well, maybe so, but I recall Zwingli writing so-and-so." And yet another person will pipe in with still another opinion from Martin Luther, or from a different famous theologian. Thus, on and on it goes, just like we see happening in the previous set of verses where the First Century Disciples were arguing over the teachings of Peter -- a.k.a. Cephas -- Paul and Apollos.

Now please do not misunderstand what I am saying here. I am not dissing these past theologians. In fact, I have a lot of respect for them, and I admire some of the great work which they each did, and the sacrifices which they had to endure

for the sake of the furtherance of Gospel. However, at the same time, my personal faith is derived from the Scriptures, and from the understanding which God has given me via the agent of His Holy Spirit. After all, is this not exactly as Jesus said it would be? Consider the following group of Bible verses:

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you . . . But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

John 14:16-17, 26, KJV

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:"

John 15:26, KJV

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment . . . Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."

John 16:7-8, 13, KJV

Please go to part two for the conclusion of this article.

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THE THEOLOGIAN WAR AND MAN WORSHIP - PART 2

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Diligently Study God's Holy Word To Increase Your Faith, The Word Of God Is Powerful So Quote It Often, BBB Reading List

Continuing our discussion from part one, and to reiterate an important point that I made in part one, our faith should only be derived directly from carefully, prayerfully and diligently reading and studying the recorded Word of God, and NOT from the doctrines of men -- whether they are famous theologians, popular preachers, Sunday school teachers, etc. -- which can often change. In contrast, God's Word does NOT change. Here again are some key verses for your personal consideration:

". . . For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven." Psalm 119:89, KJV

"I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." Psalm 138:2, KJV

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Romans 10:17, KJV

"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

Psalm 119:18, KJV

"Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food."

Job 23:12, KJV

"But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." "BETH. Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word."
Psalm 119:9, KJV

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."
Psalm 119:11, KJV

". . . Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

Psalm 119:105, KJV

"Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it." Psalm 119:140, KJV

"Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever."
Psalm 119:160, KJV

". . . thy word is truth." John 17:17, KJV

As my regular readers will already know, when I write my BBB articles and series, I very rarely -- if ever -- make it a practice to quote material from any of the famous preachers and theologians in order to substantiate my views. Instead, I quote directly from the Scriptures, which in my view, is as it should be. After all, I want your faith to be built upon the Word of God, and NOT merely upon the theological opinions of other men. As we saw a minute ago, the Apostle Paul wrote "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Here are yet some more great verses which reveal the power of God's magnificent Word:

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Hebrews 4:12, KJV

"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:"
Ephesians 6:17, KJV

"And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

1 Corinthians 2:4-5, KJV

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

1 Corinthians 2:12-13, KJV

"For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake." 1 Thessalonians 1:5, KJV

"Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts." Zechariah 4:6, KJV

"And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

Matthew 7:28-29, KJV

"And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes." Mark 1:22, KJV

"And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power."

Luke 4:32, KJV

"Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;"
Hebrews 1:3, KJV

[&]quot;. . . and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword . . ."

Revelation 1:16, KJV

"And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations . . ."
Revelation 19:15, KJV

"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

John 6:63, KJV

Clearly then, there is great power in the Word of God. Thus, that is where we should point our friends and readers. Don't you agree? In short, if you intend to be a street preacher, or an evangelist, or a Bible teacher in any fashion, I urge you to please quote God's Word often, because it is God's Word, and only God's Word, which will truly and permanently change the lives of the people around you. Remember, fancy and eloquent sermons may come and go, but only God's Word is settled forever in Heaven. So don't worry about all of those doctrinal disagreements between different theologians, or those heated and divisive online debates. You just keep busy sharing the straight, pure Word of God! Amen?

With these thoughts, I will bring this article to a close. It is my hope that you have found it informative, enlightening, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life as well. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr or with any other social network, I would really appreciate if you'd take the time to click or tap on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thanks so much, and may God bless you abundantly!

For additional information and further study, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were either mentioned in this article, or which contain topics which are related to this article. All of these articles are likewise located on the Bill's Bible Basics web server. To read these articles, simply click or tap on any link you see below.

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